

What are Oregon Sunstones?

Sunstones are feldspar crystals that formed in lava. Thirteen to fourteen million years ago, a volcano in Steens Mountain erupted, pouring out massive amounts of lava. The lava flow was subsequently covered by a vast lake and remained underwater for thousands of years. As the lake gradually dried up, the exposure to weather caused the lava to decompose and reveal loose sunstones.

Know Before You Go

The boundaries of the Sunstone Collection Area are marked by orange plastic posts that say 'Sunstone Collection Area,' and corners are marked with large Bureau of Land Management triangles on wooden posts.

Due to the isolated location, rock hounds visiting the collection area should be well prepared. The only facilities available at the site are a portable toilet, picnic tables, and a shade structure. You are welcome to camp anywhere within the Sunstone Collection Area. There is no fee for collecting sunstones, but you may not collect for trade or commercial purposes.

Private Mining Claims

Within the Sunstone Collection Area is a 20-acre parcel of private mining claims (see map). Private mining claims are also located outside and adjacent to the Sunstone Collection Area.

Large mechanized mining claim operations are visible near the entrance to the Sunstone Collection Area. Mining on these claims is regulated through Federal and State permits. These claims are restored at the end of mining operations. No public collection is allowed within these private mining claims.

Collecting

As you walk within the Sunstone Collection Area, keep your eyes to the ground and look for the opaque yellowish stones, picking them out of the soil and rocks. Sunstones can be red or green, but pale yellow is the most common color. Hand tools such as shovels and picks may be used for digging, but please fill in any holes you create. Mechanized equipment for digging is strictly prohibited.

Flora and Fauna

Although the Sunstone Collection Area may seem somewhat desolate, it is always possible to observe desert

animals. During daylight hours, black-tailed jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, short-horned lizards, sagebrush lizards, and the western skink may be seen. Nighthawks may be observed catching insects in the evening, and coyotes heard howling at night. While sagebrush is the most common plant, native grasses like Indian rice grass and Needle and Thread grow in the area.

Directions to the Site

From Plush: Take paved County Road 3-10 north for nine miles (it turns to gravel after four miles). Turn right on County Road 3-11, travel approximately ½ mile. Travel northwest approximately five miles and turn left on BLM Road 6115. Drive northwest approximately five miles, and turn right at the signed entrance onto BLM Road 6195.

For southbound travelers: From Highway 395, turn left (east) on County Road 3-10 (the Hogback Road). Drive seven miles, and turn left on BLM Road 6165 (Corn Lake Road). Travel northeast for eight miles, and turn right on BLM Road 6115. Travel seven miles, and turn left at the signed entrance onto BLM Road 6195.

Caution: Bureau of Land Management roads are unpaved and impassable in wet conditions even with a four-wheel drive vehicle. If you are planning a visit from November through May, contact the Bureau of Land Management Lakeview District office for information on weather and road conditions.

The nearest services are located in Plush, approximately 23 miles south. Services include gas and groceries at the store, and picnic tables, water, and toilets at Egan Park.

District Contact Information

Lakeview District

Lakeview Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1301 South G Street
Lakeview, OR 97630

(541) 947-2177

www.or.blm.gov/lakeview

BLM/OR/WA/GI-05/033+1122.32

Sunstone Public Collection Area



BLM

Lakeview District



Public Lands USA:
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Welcome to Oregon Sunstone Collection Area

The Sunstone Collection Area allows visitors to enjoy collecting these rare and beautiful gems in their natural setting. Located in the remote Rabbit Basin, the Sunstone Collection Area is in the high desert habitat of sagebrush and open spaces of south-central Oregon.

